



Barilla
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PRESS RELEASE

April 20, 2012

Contact: Adelaide Feuer, adelaide.feuer@edelman.com, Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition.

Fixing Broken Food System Could Reduce Disease, Unemployment, and Food Waste

New book offers solutions to malnutrition, environmental degradation, food waste, and other problems through global agricultural system reform.

Washington, D.C.—While agriculture is more productive and efficient than ever before, more than 1 billion people worldwide remain chronically hungry, and another 1 billion people are overweight or obese. Reversing these negative trends will require a more holistic approach to agriculture and more investment in agro-ecological practices. A new book, *Eating Planet*, by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN), highlights promising efforts to improve agriculture sustainability. As Earth Day 2012 approaches, it is important to understand the linkages between agriculture, poverty, hunger, and the changing climate.

“The projects highlighted in this book are exciting because they demonstrate that agriculture and food are emerging as solutions to broader global problems,” said Luca Virginio, Communications and External Relations Director at Barilla. “There is clearly a growing recognition of the positive impact that agriculture can have on livelihoods, nutrition, and the environment.”

According to the book, the most pressing problems in today’s agricultural system are a lack of access to nutritious foods, enormous amounts of food waste, environmental degradation, and a lack of interest in agriculture among the next generation.

“There is no doubt that the current food system is broken,” said Danielle Nierenberg, director of the Worldwatch Institute’s Nourishing the Planet project, which evaluates environmentally sustainable ways of alleviating hunger and poverty. “If we begin now, however, we can build a food system that is more economically, environmentally, and socially just and sustainable.”

Unfortunately, the industrialization of agricultural production has often encouraged the production of a few monoculture crops, including maize, soy, and wheat, at the expense of indigenous crop varieties that are often more nutritious and resistant to disease. This contributes to micronutrient deficiency among 1 billion of the world’s poorest people. Micronutrient

deficiency and malnutrition lead to poor mental and physical development, blindness, anemia, and other problems, especially among children.

Farmers are also increasingly marginalized, and in many countries farmers lack access to land, credit, extension services, and financial services. Because workers' unions are rare in developing countries—93 percent of the female workforce in India is not part of unions—farmers have very little bargaining power and are forced to accept low compensation for their crops. And many young people are abandoning rural communities to find work in cities. According to the European Council of Young Farmers, only 6 percent of farmers in the European Union are under the age of 35; in Kenya, the average age of farmers is 60.

Finding solutions to these problems requires cooperation among farmers, consumers, activists, and policymakers working in disciplines ranging from childhood nutrition to carbon sequestration.

Four of the many initiatives highlighted in *Eating Planet* that are working to improve the global agricultural system include:

- **Encourage youth involvement in agriculture:** In Uganda, the program Developing Innovations in School Cultivation (DISC) reconnects youth with agriculture and food by helping students manage and sell produce from school gardens. This helps students view agriculture not as a last resort, but as a rewarding and stimulating career.
- **Improve access to technology:** The International Institute of Information Technology in India has developed an agricultural extension system that uses modern forms of communication, such as mobile phones, to disseminate agricultural information to farmers. Incorporating information and communication technology into the farming process engages youth and reshapes their image of agriculture as a more modern and cutting-edge career.
- **Reward farmers for their environmental services:** To encourage farmers to protect the environment, the Rainforest Alliance is working with more than 200 million farmers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa to ensure that sustainably grown cocoa, coffee, bananas, and other products get a premium price from consumers in wealthy nations. And in Kenya, the World Bank is funding an Agricultural Carbon Project that will help farmers access carbon trading markets and get paid for practicing carbon-sequestering activities, including applying mulch to fields or planting trees among their crops.
- **Increase school feeding programs:** In Thailand, school breakfast and lunch programs reduce child malnutrition and hunger while supporting local farmers. Thailand's government funds a national school lunch program, which serves 1.8 million primary school children and 700,000 kindergarteners, or roughly 30 percent of all school children in the country. Approximately 90 percent of the program's participating schools purchase vegetables and meat from local producers, according to the World Food Programme. By providing students with nutritious food sourced from local farms, Thailand is demonstrating a healthy and functional food system that benefits everyone involved.

Eating Planet is a collaboration between BCFN and the Worldwatch Institute's Nourishing the Planet project. Worldwatch commends initiatives like these that are working to improve nutrition and draw

awareness to the importance of food in everyday life. These and other efforts need more attention, more research, and more investment to help build a more just and sustainable food system. Click [here](#) to purchase *Eating Planet*.

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For more information and for a complimentary copy of this book, please contact Adelaide Feuer at adelaide.feuer@edelman.com.

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Day, Month XX, 2012

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Better Infrastructure Needed to Improve Universal Access to Food

New book critically examines factors contributing to malnutrition and offers solutions to improve the uneven distribution of access to food

Washington, D.C.—While agriculture is more productive and efficient than ever before, more than 1 billion people worldwide remain chronically hungry, and another 1 billion are overweight or obese. In both cases, people often lack access to nutritious food, leaving them vulnerable to negative health impacts and to political, economic, and social instability. A new book, *Eating Planet*, by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN), examines the underlying causes of malnutrition and highlights promising efforts to improve the uneven distribution of access to food. *Eating Planet* will be available to purchase at XX. As Earth Day 2012 approaches, it is important to understand the linkages between agriculture, poverty, malnutrition, and the changing climate.

“Access to food is one of the first and most fundamental of all human rights,” said Luca Virginio, Communications and External Relations Director at Barilla. “Where food is lacking, it becomes impossible to live with dignity, and the rights to a healthy life and peaceful coexistence are undermined.”

Unfortunately, structural problems related to poverty, inept governance, and the instability of the food market challenge universal access to food. Without a more equitable distribution of wealth and the creation of income opportunities, the poorest segments of society will continue to go hungry. Governance mechanisms in the food sector are often inadequate and exacerbate global malnutrition through imbalanced trade policies and insufficient investment in food security. Agriculture and food markets are further challenged as energy markets, climate change, and population growth create rising instability.

“There is no doubt that today’s food system is broken, and that current ways of measuring sustainability and well-being are inadequate,” said Guido Barilla, Chairman of the Barilla Group. “If we begin now, however, we can build a food system that is more economically, environmentally, and socially just and sustainable.”

There are no shortcuts or half measures when it comes to creating viable ways for all people to have secure access to food. The conditions needed for the proper functioning of the food system are complex and require an equally complex approach. *Eating Planet* highlights four actions that can be taken to address the problem:

Facilitate Economic Development of the Poorest Countries. Population growth, urbanization, and climate change present new challenges for the planet, especially in developing countries where these trends often have the biggest impact. New innovations in economic development can help the agriculture sector reduce price instability and lessen the adverse impacts of climate change, scarcity of natural resources, and growing demand for agriculture raw materials.

Reinforce Worldwide Governance Mechanisms. Governance mechanisms for food security are weak and inadequate and require precise action at various levels. In order to create a more secure food system, policymakers must make food a primary priority on the international political and economic agenda. Food cannot be treated as a simple commodity. Governments can increase global food security and mitigate price instability by reducing protectionist barriers, improving transparency of inventory levels, creating a multilateral regional and cross-border food reserve, reducing support for investing in biofuels over food, and regulating financial speculation of food commodities.

Facilitate New Approaches and Tools to Measure and Promote Well-Being. Making effective decisions about the food system requires policymakers to view well-being beyond just economic considerations. These actors must look to models that analyze a broad range of factors contributing to well-being and take into account their sustainability. The Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition created such a model with a focus on its principal areas of research: food and proper nutrition. Through analysis and careful consideration of nutrition and its impact on quality of life, Barilla developed an Index of Well Being and an Index of Sustainability to help inform public decision making around food security. By focusing on true well-being and sustainability, decision makers can work to create sustainable economic development in the agricultural sector, reduce food price volatility, and create a viable food system.

Manage Food Styles. Estimating changes in food consumption patterns are a difficult task, and today’s predictive models have serious limitations because they downplay climate change and often ignore environmental sustainability. Choosing more sustainable food consumption models for the future will allow farmers, scientists, policymakers, and consumers to reduce the emphasis on productivity.

Eating Planet is a collaboration between BCFN and the Worldwatch Institute’s Nourishing the Planet project, an evaluation of environmentally sustainable solutions to alleviate hunger and poverty. Worldwatch commends initiatives like these that are working to improve nutrition and draw awareness to

the importance of food in everyday life. These and other efforts need more attention, more research, and more investment to help build a more just and sustainable food system. **To purchase *Eating Planet*, XX.**

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Sustainable Agriculture Requires Public Support, Responsible Food Choices, and Equitable Distribution of Resources

Climate change, an aging farmer population, and limited natural resources rank among the challenges facing sustainable agriculture.

Washington, D.C.—Many agricultural practices create widespread damage to Earth’s natural resources: 25 percent of the Earth’s land is highly degraded; chemicals used on farms seriously harm both wildlife and humans; and anywhere from 5 to 30 tons of soil per hectare erodes each year. A new book, *Eating Planet*, by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN), highlights promising efforts to solve these and other agricultural problems. *Eating Planet* will be available to purchase at XX. As Earth Day 2012 approaches, it is important to understand the constraints and opportunities of agriculture to feed the world and nourish the planet.

“There already exists a range of approaches and innovations working to help sustainable agriculture flourish,” said Guido Barilla, Chairman of the Barilla Group. “Farmers’ cooperatives, increased agricultural education, and advances in water conservation are some of the most promising trends helping to spread sustainable agriculture across the globe.”

Among the solutions put forward in *Eating Planet* is the Double Food and Environmental Pyramid, a revolutionary new concept that links together the nutritional and environmental impacts of different types of food.

“The Double Food Pyramid can be a dynamic educational tool,” said Luca Virginio, Communications and External Relations Director at Barilla. “It serves the traditional purpose of showing people which foods they should eat more or less of, but it can also help change their patterns of consumption by demonstrating the environmental impacts of the foods they eat.”

The higher an item is on the environmental pyramid, the higher the environmental impacts are of producing it; the higher an item is on the food pyramid, the less healthy it is to eat. Meat is highest on both pyramids, for example, because it should be eaten in small quantities for health reasons, and its production has a high environmental impact.

The book draws on advice from experts and activists around the world to suggest additional ways to create a more sustainable agricultural system. These include:

Transferring agricultural knowledge from generation to generation: One of the most serious challenges to sustainable agriculture is the lack of interest in farming among younger generations. Instead of inheriting their parents' accumulated agricultural knowledge, youth are moving to cities to find a higher or more stable source of income. This means that sometimes centuries' worth of knowledge, especially local innovations to solving local agricultural problems, are being lost. Organizations and governments must encourage young people to explore agriculture as a career and create support to ensure that agriculture can provide a decent livelihood.

Increasing resilience through agricultural diversity: The threat of pests, disease, drought, and unpredictable weather events is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Preserving agricultural diversity is an important strategy to protecting the resiliency of the land. Crop rotation and increasing the plant varieties grown on farms are two such strategies. These and other relatively simple sustainable growing practices can be disseminated to farmers through modern communication networks or agricultural training programs; however, more funding is needed for many of these programs to make an impact.

Ensuring equitable water access: Fresh, unpolluted water currently makes up only a minimal percentage of global water reserves, and pressures on these reserves increase every day due to population growth and rising demands for water-intensive goods. Meat production, for example, requires much more water than fruit or vegetable production, and is rising at a dramatic pace due to a global increase in meat consumption. Constraints on water supplies will adversely affect the poorest of the world's population, who have few rights and means to access crucial resources like water. BCFN advocates the creation of regulations that will assure the "right to water" among vulnerable groups, such as sub-Saharan subsistence farmers, and that will avoid unfair or sudden increases of water prices.

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Expert Analysis Confirms Diet and Exercise Are Key to Health and Longevity

As the prevalence of chronic diseases increases, improved diets and better lifestyle choices are critical to improving global health.

Washington, D.C.—Chronic diseases, including cardiovascular (heart) disease, diabetes, and cancers, are the world’s biggest killers, causing 35 million deaths annually and accounting for 63 percent of all deaths worldwide, including 80 percent of deaths in low- to medium-income countries. The increase in the incidence of chronic diseases is strongly linked to poor diet and insufficient exercise, according to leading scientists and the latest research on the subject. A new book, *Eating Planet*, by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN), compiles this research and expert advice and highlights the essential role that food and diet play in a long and healthy life. *Eating Planet* will be available to purchase at XX. With the population of developing countries projected to pass 6 billion in the next few years, it is crucial to understand the causes, management, and prevention of chronic diseases.

“Chronic diseases have a huge economic, health, and societal impact on nations, and the costs and financial burdens of these preventable diseases on society are alarming,” said Luca Virginio,

Communications and External Relations Director at Barilla. “By studying the linkages that food has with many aspects of human lives, the prevention of a number of chronic diseases during adulthood can be achieved.”

“The relationship between food and longevity signifies that healthier diets are the key to longer life expectancy and better overall health,” said Guido Barilla, Chairman of the Barilla Group. “The objective is not just to live longer, but to also live better.”

The book emphasizes the importance of diet for continuing mental and physical health into old age. A diet that includes sufficient vitamins and other nutrients can reduce the incidence or severity of common conditions that afflict the aging: Alzheimer’s and dementia, osteoporosis, and inflammatory states. The onset of dementia, for instance, is associated with an insufficiency of magnesium (contained in cereal grains, walnuts, almonds, peanuts, buckwheat, cocoa, wheat germ, lentils, green vegetables, meats, and starchy foods). Approximately 80 percent of people over 65 suffer from at least one chronic disease, and approximately 50 percent of them are affected by two or more chronic diseases.

In addition to diet, a person’s lifestyle and behavioral tendencies have become influential in the onset and progression of diseases. Around 80 percent of all cases linked to chronic diseases could have been prevented by eliminating certain risk factors such as smoking tobacco, unhealthy dietary models and customs, physical inactivity, and the excessive consumption of alcohol.

The expert analysis compiled in *Eating Planet* reveals the latest recommendations for policymakers and citizens alike that lead to a healthy, long life. These include the need to:

- Encourage the spread of dietary information and education to promote healthier eating habits;
- Structure social and healthcare policies and interventions to promote healthy dietary behaviors; and
- Adopt a balanced diet, like the Mediterranean diet, and an active lifestyle for the prevention of the most common chronic diseases.

We need to eat well today to live better and longer tomorrow. What is needed is not so much to find ways to live longer, but rather actions to live better, for longer. This involves increasing research into the relationship between food and human health, encouraging lifestyle and diet changes, and enacting policies that promote and incentivize healthy dietary habits.

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Strengthening Cultural Connections with Food Could Improve Health and Promote Culinary Traditions

New book analyzes how we can reestablish our relationship with food through cultural traditions, social connections, and appreciation of taste.

Washington, D.C.—The average U.S. supermarket now carries upwards of 40,000 products. As people are constantly faced with an overwhelming variety of food choices, as well as contradictory information about the health benefits of different foods, our general understanding of food and its cultural and symbolic significance is decreasing. This loss of dietary identity and breakdown of culinary traditions is making it harder for people to nourish themselves through the simple act of deciding what to eat each day. A new book, *Eating Planet*, by the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN), explores how changing lifestyles play an important role in this global trend. *Eating Planet* will be available to purchase at XX.

“Nutritional knowledge and gastronomic skills have declined in many cultures,” said Luca Virginio, Communications and External Relations Director at Barilla. “Many people have lost the ability to decide what they should eat and how to prepare it. Increasing uncertainty about the health consequences of foods makes each meal a challenge and reduces our enjoyment of food.” Many people now view food simply as a way to fill themselves up, without considering the social significance that food has held throughout human history. Rising household and work demands and busier schedules mean that less time can be devoted to food, and convenience, not taste or quality, has become an important driver of food choice. Eating has, in many ways, been reduced to a mechanical process.

“People now seek out speed of consumption and choice,” said Guido Barilla, Chairman of the Barilla Group. “This has led to a growing disinterest in the characteristics of the product, as well as a decline in the quality of the social interaction that accompanies the consumption of food.” A turning point is emerging, however. As trends like the Slow Food movement and the “100-mile diet” show, people are starting to seek out authenticity in their food and focusing on the flavor

and enjoyment of food rather than its convenience. By giving more thought to their food choices, individuals can strengthen their connection with food and reap the benefits that a healthy, varied diet can offer.

The Mediterranean culture, in particular, can serve as an example for reconciling food and lifestyle. The Mediterranean tradition focuses on food as an integral part of culture, making the simple rituals of preparing and eating food important in everyday life. Key elements of the Mediterranean food tradition that can be adopted more widely include: **Conviviality:** By bringing a social dimension to food, through preparing and consuming meals together, the cultural importance of food can be revived. By placing food back in the context of our social lives, we can also strengthen our personal relationships and increase human interaction. **Knowledge transfer:** Sharing skills and expertise about food preparation can simultaneously strengthen relationships and increase appreciation of meals that are prepared as a form of art. When sharing in the cooking of meals, individuals gain a better understanding of the preparation process and the ingredients that go into putting a meal together—traditions that need to be preserved. **Links with food sources:** In the Mediterranean tradition, food preparers have a close relationship with the raw materials that go into meals. Increased involvement with food preparation can bring greater respect for the plant and animal ingredients that are needed for meals. It can foster a deeper appreciation of the need for high-quality raw materials, such as fresh vegetables and spices, or ethically raised animals. Consumers have the power to not only reestablish their connections with the food system, but also improve their health, support local economies, and improve the environment by making better food choices. *Eating Planet* shows how individuals can re-link food with culture, bringing food's importance back into focus.

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